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Sahtu Land Use Plan – Review of Draft 2 dated April 30, 2009

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General Comments

Overall, commendations are in order, for a more complete draft on a hugely complicated document. The draft contains all of the required elements for a plan.

Workshops, explaining the plan and soliciting comments will be necessary because the document is so large and difficult to wade through for the average person. Most will not be able to submit written comments.

As a participant (beneficiary) of the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, I feel strongly that the plan not become so watered down in the back and forth before a final draft, so as to lose its protective edge. It should always be underlined that a land use plan for the SSA came into existence, in the first place, as a result of the desire for more control over what happens on the land on the part of the Dene and Metis, during the land claim negotiations.

Comments by hardcopy page #'s

P.10 Existing uses: I agree with the proposed approach.

P.17 Not major, except for accuracy, but I seem recall reading in some old HBC journals that FGH was relocated to the present site in 1836. (maybe I confused a 9 for a 6)

"Tulita" actually translates to "where the waters meet", i.e., the clear water of the Bear River meets muddy water of the Mackenzie.

P.18 GNWT Bureau of Stats has more current population numbers to November 2008.

P.21 Traditional Place Names

Somewhere in the text, I suggest that it state that Map 4, identifies only a representative sample of the thousands of place names within the SSA.

P.23 Map 4 Sahtu Traditional Place Names

I know that it is difficult to find the resources to document Dene knowledge of the land. Much work remains to be done. However, I recommend that major priority be put into the spelling and the location accuracy of Map 4, before a final draft. Accuracy is important because once something is put into print, it becomes hard to correct. It is also important for future Dene generations who may become curious about the names that their ancestors used. Names that have been used for hundreds and thousands of years should not be confused because of government sponsored documents in the 20th and 21st centuries.

I note the following:

"Besalaline" shown at the confluence of the Ontaratue and Mackenzie rivers, should be "Besala Niline", which is the name for the Ontaratue River. (Incidentally, the word "Ontaratue" is Emile Petitot's attempt, in the 1860's, at spelling the Dene name for Marion Lake which is "Ontahora Tue". Somehow, subsequent to Petitot, "Ontaratue", became designated as the map name for Besala Niline. Jim Pierrot likes to call this same river "Pierrot's Creek" because his father raised him in this area.)

"Ketani?an Tue" shown just north of Lac Maunoir should be shown immediately (almost touching), "Duta" at the north end of Kapami Tue (Colville Lake).

"Tusile Tue" is shown on the south side of the Hare Indian River. Its on the north side of the Hare Indian, and is located southwest of "Nofee K'osele". Also, Nofee K'osele, should be written as "Nofee K'osele Tue", as it is a lake. Some guys refer to it in English as "Little Loche Lake", the small cousin of "Big Loche Lake" or "Loche Lake" (Lac a Jacques) and Nofee K'ahodeh Tue in Dene.

P.24 Metis Special Areas

"Many places...Metis history and culture." – I would change it to "Some places...Metis history and culture."

P.25 Ongoing Relationship with the Land

I like this because it is a brief paragraph, which ought to make sense about the relationship of the Dene to the land, to almost anyone reading the document.

P.31 Climate Change

Some elders in Deline and Colville Lake have noted that the thickness of lake ice has gone from 8' to 5' on Great Bear Lake and 6' to 4' on Colville Lake. They should know, as they are people who depend heavily on fish in summer and winter.

Beginning in the late 70's, there has been the build-up of more and more frost on the willows and trees in the winter time. This used to happen in the fall, but after a period of time with wind all this frost used to disappear. With the quicker and unpredictable change between warm and cold weather in the winter, brought about by climate change, this (frost build-up) has been occurring regularly since the late 70's, in winter. The frost becomes so thick that the wind doesn't blow it off. This affects small winter birds and grouse that depend on the trees for food. The frost was not hard to notice, because, when we travel by snowmobile, on seismic lines where short willows grow and when you drive over these willows, the frost falls on the hood and windshield and into the engine where it melted and caused steam. The steam, soaks into your mitts and parka, making it necessary to stop more often to make fire to dry out.

There is a section up the Hare Indian River, above Neraten (winter road crossing), where a whole bunch of big trees have uprooted. It looks like what happened is that, as the permafrost melted underneath, there was less stability for the larger trees and a moderately strong wind was able to knock them all down.

P.43 Barrenland Caribou – according to GNWT (ENR), the population of the Bluenose West Herd, which populates the Colville Lake/FGH areas, was at around 100,000 in 1988 and then 20,000 in 2005. Is this worth mentioning as a value and as a reason for certain conformity requirements in the plan? I think that it is – if not, we may find ourselves without that herd in the not too distant future.

P.70 My preference is to include subsurface protection for protected areas.

P.76 Vision

I prefer more conservation, as opposed to economic development, and to keep more of the SSA in the state it has always existed.

P.82 Would prefer "conditions" to the word "terms".

P.84 Map 16 Land Use Zones

I note that a large portion of the GUZ total in the plan is north of FGH and around the Colville Lake area. I have a concern about this because this area is the winter range of the Bluenose West Herd, a herd which is already in decline. In the future, there will be

pressure to develop known gas deposits at Tweed, etc ., which could require a choice between caribou or gas.

Fee Yee – the Ramparts near FGH on the Dehcho. Hard to see zoning on the map. Is it part of the Tsudeh Niline –Tuyata PCI? I seem to recall that it is fee simple selected land. Would be a shame to have it developed.

P.89 Mackenzie Valley Pipeline - It has the potential to seriously prejudice other land uses. It will affect, my expectation as a beneficiary to the “peaceful enjoyment” of the SSA. When it is built, it will lead to huge pressures for the development of other oil and gas deposits, which will mean on-going pressures for future Sahtu Land Use Planning Boards to make exceptions that could go against the goals of the Plan.

P.98 Underground River – Does the underground river flow into Belot Lake? I thought that the flow comes from Belot Lake, disappears somewhere south of Belot, then reappears as a tributary of the Hare Indian River (“Rabbit-skin River” in local parlance).

P.100 CR#23 – This is pretty major stuff that is hard to support without more detail. There is nothing mandatory in the requirement. I prefer stronger requirements in this area but have no clear suggestions.

P.115 Decho – Somewhere in this whole section about the River, it should be stated that the information provided is only some of the information and that it would require resources to do a more complete inventory of the importance of the River

Ecological – the River is also important as a resting stop for migratory waterfowl in the spring and in the fall. The shoreline of the river is habitat for sandpipers which can be seen almost constantly in the summer. The Sans Sault Rapids and the Ramparts Rapids are also important feeding areas for scoters (black-ducks). Other waterfowl also use the river for food. The Ramparts Rapids near FGH are also a spawning area for cisco and river whitefish. For me personally, as a now part time harvester, and having been born and raised for the first 6 years entirely on the land, and subsequent to that always continuing my contact with the environment, I find it difficult, in my psyche, to imagine a world without the Dehcho as it is. The Dehcho is like a key article in mine and other people’s constitution as Dene.

P.119 Nofee K’odah Tue –

My son and I made a trip to this lake this summer(July 2009). We’ve made a number of trips to the lake over the years. In two days, we saw 3 moose, of which two were a cow and calf. The south end of the lake, has lakes and marshes, with heavily wooded areas, which leads me to believe that it is an important calving area for moose. I know

from traditional knowledge, that moose are careful in selecting calving locations. They have their young, in areas that are difficult terrain for large predators like wolves and bears. These areas are usually extremely bushy or they are surrounded by water. Wolves don't usually enjoy water.

We also saw a large black bear sow with 3 cubs. Having 3 cubs means that there is a lot of food around, so they are doing well.

We also saw a total of about 10 moulting swans with young on the lake. The larger lakes (Tunago, Loon, Rorey, Aubrey, Belot, etc.) north of FGH are nesting areas for sometimes several pairs of swans depending on the size of the lake and the availability of food.

We also saw many sardines in the water, which provided food for probably around 10 pairs of common loon (G. Immer).

Usually the lake has plenty of scoters but this year, we only saw a small flock of around 20. There were plenty of moulting Canada geese, around every bend in the small river that enters the south end of the lake.

There were two abandoned tent frames (still with the tents on them) on the south eastern shore, and many signs of human activity from the distant past as evidenced by tree stumps, cut by axe, at many locations along the shore.

P.120 Ohdarah Tue (Marion Lake)

In the spring of 1980 or thereabouts, we passed spring at Kelly's cabin, which is on the Dehcho, about 10 miles downstream from the confluence of the Ontaratue and Mackenzie. The location that in English is called "Kelly's cabin", in Dene is known as "Duwaindin", which is a traditional spring time location for muskrat and geese. That spring, we (Jim Pierrot's family, James Caesar, etc.) visited Marion Lake. We packed a canoe on the Dene trail, from Duwaindin to the north end of Marion. It was still a good trail at that time. Its a beautiful lake that should remain as is.

P.144 Dek'one

Socio – Cultural Importance

I suggest the following: "This is where Yamoria roasted the giant beavers that he killed at Bear Rock, by hanging them to the fire. As the beavers roasted, the grease dripped down into the ground. The grease caught fire and continues to burn to this day. The smoke is not always visible, but if one sees the smoke when passing through this area, it is believed to be a good omen..."

P. 151 Oscar Lake in Dene is called "Datzimi Tue". To double check, you can ask Wilfred Jackson or Wilfred McDonald in Norman Wells. Wilfred McDonald, has a place at the mouth of Oscar Creek, (Datzimi Niline) about 25 miles north of NWells, on the Mackenzie.

P.153 Yamoga Rock – am surprised by the "large numbers of muskoxen...consistently...". We saw one muskox on the Hare Indian, near Lac a Jacques a few years ago in the summer and were surprised to see it there. I don't know about now but I know a few years back that muskox were seen around the Sam McRae/ Turton Lake area. At the time this was considered unusual. Yamoga Rock is right in the path of daily NWells-FGH flights. Large wild ungulates usually avoid areas that are impacted regularly by airplanes and helicopter noises. Also have not heard this from anyone in FGH. As far as I know, the main reason for the preservation of Yamoga Rock is cultural.

P.173 SLUPB

Another question might be "Are non-mandatory, non-legally binding aspects of the Plan being implemented?"